

JUSTICE FOR THE STOLEN GENERATION

THE GREENS' PLAN TO PROVIDE REPARATIONS TO VICTORIAN SURVIVORS OF THE STOLEN GENERATION.

Ten years on from the apology to the Stolen Generation and still survivors have received no compensation for the trauma they endured. It's appalling that the Andrews Government has done nothing to address this on a state or federal level. The Greens will fight for justice for the Stolen Generation.

Between 1910 and 1970, around 100,000 Aboriginal children were forcibly taken from their loving families, and placed in institutions or white homes. This was done as part of the racist assimilation agenda, 'White Australia'. Many of these children suffered abuse, degrading and racist behaviour, and thus deep trauma from what they endured and the loneliness of being separated from their family, culture and community.

Twenty one years on from the Bringing Them Home report, and 10 years on from the apology to the Stolen Generation, not only has the Federal Government failed to provide reparations, the Victorian Government is the only state in Australia that has not provided some kind of compensation scheme to survivors of the Stolen Generation.

It's deeply shameful that we continue to re-traumatise these people by failing to act on this unfinished business. The hurt of this injustice runs deep. With so many Stolen Generation members now aging, those who still survive deserve to finally get some peace and comfort through the provision of a reparations scheme.

OUR PLAN

The Victorian Greens will consult with members of the Stolen Generation to deliver a \$110 million package of

measures that meets their needs and aspirations. We envisage the package will include:

- **\$200,000 compensation for each Stolen Generation member, up to the value of \$100 million over two years.**
- **\$10m over 4 years, which will be used to create memorials, keeping places, dedicated aged care and other services required.**
- **Further consultation with communities regarding establishing Healing Places across the State.**

This Victorian scheme will not fully compensate members of the Stolen Generation for the pain they have endured, but it will help bring some relief.

The Greens will continue to advocate for establishment of a national reparations scheme and for the recommendations of the 'Bringing Them Home Report' to be fully implemented.

VICTORIA'S SHAME

In Victoria, 11-13% of all Aboriginal people born before 1972 were taken from their families. As a result of their trauma, Stolen Generations suffer alarming rates chronic

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health issues, disability and economic and social disadvantage.

Research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released this year revealed for the first time the extent of damage on people's lives:

- 67% live with a disability or restrictive long-term condition
- 70% rely on government payments as their main source of income
- 66% of Stolen Generations live in households within the three lowest income percentages
- 40% have experienced homelessness in the past 10 years
- 91% never completed Year 12
- 62% (of working age) are not employed
- 39% (over the age of 50) report poor mental health.

These findings highlight not only the terrible impact of stealing children from their parents loving arms, but the further damage of not providing compensation or adequate support services to this community over recent decades.

Not only are the impacts felt on the Stolen Generation, it has caused significant intergenerational trauma with children and grandchildren. Today 36% of Aboriginal people in Victoria are descended from the generation who were stolen, so the impacts of this abuse are far reaching.

CONSULTATION, COMPENSATION AND REVIEW

The Green will undertake a consultation with members of the Stolen Generation in Victoria and support them to self-determine how they would like the scheme designed and what should be the final mix of compensation provided and other supports to meet their needs and help provide peace. These might include culturally safe, trauma informed healing places, memorials, keeping places, funeral funds or much more. Based on this

process, we will tailor the \$110 million package indicated. Further funding will also be provided at the appropriate time to establish Healing Places, once the community has determined their vision.

Just 17% of the people taken nationally survive today. In Victoria, there are just an estimated 1,029 survivors today. These Aboriginal people, who were removed or kept from their families under the 'Aborigines Protection Act (Vic)' will be eligible for the state scheme. People compensated under the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse redress scheme will also be fully eligible for the Victorian Stolen Generation scheme.

Once the reparations scheme has been in place for two years (or earlier if required), we will review it to assess the need for further funding and to ensure everyone who seeks it received compensation and it is providing the best support possible.

ENDING CHILD REMOVALS

Saying sorry means not doing it again. Yet Aboriginal children are still being removed from their families at an alarming rate. Nationally, when the 'Bringing them Home' report was released in 1997, one in every five children living in out of home care were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; today, 20 years on, it is one in three.

In Victoria, in 2016–17 there were around 2000 Aboriginal children in out-of-home care in Victoria. Aboriginal children are 13 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal children in Victoria. The Victorian Taskforce 1000 inquiry found that the system is in crisis, with 60 per cent of Aboriginal children they reviewed being placed with a non-Aboriginal carer and 41 per cent being placed outside their extended families and 40 separated from siblings.

The state has a responsibility to ensure that every Victorian child is protected from harm, abuse and neglect in cases where natural parents cannot do so, for whatever reason. However, far more can and must to be

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done to intervene early in child protection before it gets to this point. Further, the State has the moral and legal responsibility to ensure that these Aboriginal children are not removed from their extended family or community and that parents are given proper support to get their lives on track and be reunited with their children.

The Greens will invest in early intervention in child protection, creating wrap around services to support struggling families and support services to ensure family reunification happens more often and sooner. We will stop Aboriginal child removals from their extended families and communities when it is necessary for children to be placed in out-of-home care. We will ensure kinship care payments not only match foster care payments, but that both these payments are increased to match those interstate, so families can better afford care for these children.

We supported the launch of Grandmothers Against Removals and will continue to support initiatives to ensure proper consultation with Aboriginal communities in child removal cases.

OTHER PARTIES

Way back in 2002 the then Labor Government, under Steve Bracks, reviewed this issue. They decided not to provide a state-based compensation scheme, even though the State Government holds a substantial responsibility for the plight of the Stolen Generation. Instead, they committed to advocate for a federal compensation and redress scheme.

Sixteen years on and no federal scheme has been put in place, and the Andrews Government, and the Liberal Government before them, have completely failed to act on this injustice. Victoria is now the only state in Australia without a compensation scheme for the Stolen Generation.